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HENRY SOMERVILLE,

A T A L E.

V O L. 1.

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A T A L E.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

HARTLEBOURN CASTLE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

V O L. I.

— Dans l'avenir pour mon ame embelli
Tout me rioit, tout me flattoit d'avance ;
De mes vieux ans mon fils étoit l'ami,
De ses succès j'étois enorgueilli,
J'élevois sur son nom ma superbe esperance.

VICEE.

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HENRY SOMERVILLE.

CHAP. I.

THE animation of active virtue, and the lofty spirit of a dignified and manly fortitude, never fail to inspire in the human breast those elevated sentiments of superior honour, which preserve the soul from descending to mean indulgences in vice, or to sinister methods of self-advantage: they awaken the just pride of manhood; they swell the heart with the

VOL. I.

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truest

truest sensibility; they spread before it the unabating charm of cheerful benevolence, and expand the mind to embrace the realised possession of honourable and enviable independence.

To cultivate these pleasures, and to illuminate the little circle of his neighbourhood by their radiance, was the business of Mr. Somerville's life. His education had been classical, and his industry in study unabated; what he had acquired in early years had been re-cultivated and re-sown in the leisure of cooler maturity; and the pursuits of a country life had invigorated the ample capacity of his mind, enlarged by the study of nature,

ture, and open to all her glorious expanse.

An athletic form aided these generous honours of his mind—their powers were alike capacious; their choice, the united pursuit of virtue.

A noble susceptibility discovered itself very early in his heart—framed by nature to be a natural man, he soon disdained the shackles of ceremonious life, which invents innumerable obstacles to be surmounted, before the glowing admiration of the heart is suffered to confess itself: three interviews had been scarcely necessary to apprise him of his attachment; something within had told him the congenial merit which at-

tracted him—it was needless to ask himself whether he loved.

The harmony and confidence which had always subsisted between his father and himself, led him to communicate with all the eager haste of early unadulterated affection the feelings of his heart.—But here his chief and only friend unexpectedly damped his ardour;—his father, who had saved a handsome fortune by trade, was not accustomed to consider the impulse of his heart before he had consulted that of his purse. The lady on whom his son had so warmly placed his affections, had but trifling expectations, and those at the decease of her mother, as yet only in the middle

dle of her days. Mr. Somerville's habits of life were those of genteel affluence: he reasoned upon the difficulties of a rising family; his own life a tolerably good one; nothing to be advanced till his death; and painted the many smarting anxieties of trade which he had experienced, as reasons why his son should not look to that as a resource: besides, the impossibility and imprudence of his involving his capital a second time—that his son had all the world before him, could command an heiress; and if not, it was time enough to fix his choice, which if done too early produced a too late repentance.—The surprise and almost

indignation which this discourse excited in his son, produced a momentary silence—an anguish too well known to need description, broke at length into a fervent declaration of his passion. “Why, sir,” said he, “was I blessed with feelings from Heaven, which I am told it is the penurious duty of prudence to suppress? Whence originate the affections we cannot see in others or feel in ourselves without reverence or admiration, if, when they arise, they are to be stifled by the base estimation of pecuniary value? Surely, sir, my time has been grievously wasted, to have cultivated the virtues of the mind, if their blossoms are to be
torn

corn down before they can ripen into fruit !”

The father affected to treat this language as the effect of his son’s romantic fancy ; and, rather to soothe him before they parted, intermingled in the cup a few of those acknowledgments of the lady’s merit, which, whether given in praise or in objection, never fail to urge on the progress of the attachment they cement.

Our young friend withdrew to a silent and retired part of his father’s grounds, where he indulged his mind in the fervour of its own reflections on the passing scenes. Not one objection to the family or character of the lady ; no traits of dissatisfaction

at her manners, conduct, person, or accomplishments. Are these inferior to fortune? Is any one of them less than income? Are the gifts of all-seeing and gracious Heaven of less substance than human arts, and perfidious gold? Am I formed then to be an useless slave to indolence and pride? Have I these active limbs, this busy mind, to rest a drone upon the hive of others? Oh, forbid it honour—virtue! What then is sin if this be none?—But duty, parental duty?—Let my life be guided by shewing it—by convincing my worthy father that I do not flight his advice, but that his objection does not rest upon a ground equal in
the

the smallest degree to its opposing and commanding recommendations; and, therefore, our prudence and affection may unite to constitute great part of his future happiness.

Convincing himself thus by his own reasoning, and trusting in his father's good sense and affection, he resolved to indulge the hope which he soon after realised.

Mr. Somerville was an only child—his mother died during his early youth—a few very distant relations remained of a large and ancient stock—his father, therefore, who had never formed very warm friendships, had little opportunity for disinheriting his son on account of his

B 5 marriage,

marriage, which every other than himself applauded.

Selfish and fordid, he resolved upon a plan which would effectually revenge himself of his disappointment; for he had raised such expectations from his sons's virtues and personal merits, that he had often cheered his evening lucubrations with the prospect of his name being perpetuated by an union with high life, rank and fortune, and the dignity of a baronet with a seat in the senate of Great Britain. To have these glorious hopes dashed in one unhappy moment by the smiles of a woman whose only recommendations were her virtues, was a theme of continual vexation,

ation, and preyed upon his mind with a severity which no attentions from his son and daughter could allay, nor any of the charming caresses of their rising family, even in their most domestic intercourse, disperse. He determined, therefore, unknown to his son, to raise annuities on his own life upon the security of his estates; and, as he felt himself emancipated from all obligation to support or gratify any one but himself, he lived to the extent of his enlarged income; and, excepting a few sparing occasional presents to his daughter-in-law and his grand-children, he sported upon himself, upon his equipage, his grounds, and a few popular meet-

ings, the whole of that substance which his son had been taught to expect.

Such was the attachment which united the younger Mr. and Mrs. Somerville. A small income arising from an estate about twenty miles distant from his father's, which he had received by the will of a deceased uncle, now much increased by his own residence upon it, was the sole support of his family : here he pursued, unfettered by the dull round of fashion and pleasure, which intoxicate and corrupt the metropolis, the nobler occupations of his farm, and the education of his children. In a few years he found himself the father
of

of three children : the eldest of these was a promising boy, whose open countenance and pleasant address secured the unlimited praises of all who saw him; and to whom they gave the name of Henry : the two youngest were daughters, who very soon began to shew the root from whence they sprung, and to emulate the virtues which rendered their parents universally estimable.

CHAP. II.

MR. Somerville had frequently reflected upon the evils of public education, and himself felt its defects ; and though he saw how unpopular this idea was, yet he had very early adopted the bold resolution of not yielding to general opinions, or common prejudices, on any subject, unless he could discover that they were founded on some data of inalienable right, or moral principle.

To preserve youth from the contamination of early communication,
and

and to give it a taste for manly exercise and virtue, with an unshaken *love of truth undeviating*, were in his mind the first sources and springs of education, and which will alone secure happiness. When he turned his mind upon seminaries of education, he perceived and remembered, that with all the merit of care, of example, of exhortation and precept, and even the terror of punishment, it was not within the power of the tutors to effect these great essentials. By the communication with one another, with various dispositions, with those whose business called them to the school, with their own friends and acquaintance, and with the heap of cunning evasions

evasions learnt from each other to
 conceal the truth, to hide offences,
 to excuse from punishment, and the
 many mental reservations which pre-
 vented often the whole truth from
 appearing, it became next to an im-
 possibility that the innate purity of
 virtue and truth could remain long
 with any pupil who mingled in the
 crowd of an established academy:
 it was, therefore, under his own eye
 that he hoped to find a remedy for
 these defects; but this required unre-
 mitted regard and attention; conti-
 nual vigilance over the opening
 flower, that the breath or whisper of
 evil should not exhale its contagion
 upon it, nor cast its bane near the

root

root to check the flourishing luxuriance of its native beauty.

Mrs. Somerville, whose elegant mind and warm devotion to all her husband's exemplary and unusual merits, seldom heard one of his maxims without reflecting upon and adopting it, and whose accomplishments well enabled her to co-operate with him in a plan so desirable, which tended to keep both her girls near her person; saw with increased affection and delight the progress of her family under the auspices of an heavenly felicity, which the goodness of her heart often sighed to think was not more generally the lot of society.

As

As the dawn of youthful years drew on, and began to shew the early blossoms of his mind, young Henry became his father's constant companion, and partook of his cheerful conversation.

Mr. Somerville had long been in the habit of thinking much and speaking little ; but his children now called upon him to perform a new office: he had few moments unoccupied in the day, and the innumerable questions which he encouraged them to ask, furnished him with the necessity of thus publishing the information he had acquired, and of rendering his domestic circle more delightful. His friends were well
chosen,

chosen, and his house was the cheerful residence of harmony and truth, because neither falsehood nor calumny dared approach it.

The manly exercises of the field, the knowledge of cultivation, and an undaunted courage, were often the lessons of the day; and the evening closed by gay and social endearments, embellished by improving allegories and diverting pastimes, which contributed each in their degree to promote the value of virtue.

The examples of great actions in history, of amiable qualifications and the softer graces in poetry, formed the frequent theme of his instruction, intermingled tenderly with

with moral lessons calculated to inspire the most grateful sense of divine perfection and general improvement.

Accustomed thus early to the habits of courage and endurance, Henry could, at an early age, master the turbulence of the most unruly horse in his neighbourhood; could pitch the [coit at the greatest distance; could endure the hardest fatigue and suffer the longest hunger and thirst of any one of his age; every manufacture that he saw, he could give some rational account of; and of every animal or bird that he discovered he knew the various properties.

Mr. Somerville often found it necessary to hide his admiration at this
intelligence,

intelligence, to suppress the bursting emotions of praise, and to check the natural commendation of his talents or disposition ; for nothing, he would often say, so constantly tends to excite self-estimation and to produce hypocrisy, as frequent repetitions of praise, or the discovery of your own feelings when you see that nature has filled the young eye with tears.

Mrs. Somerville took her part in this system, and raised her daughters to be the fair counterpart of their brother : their accomplishments consisted of those useful and ornamental branches of education which would render them amiable and respectable: she could herself instruct them in

music and dancing, with many of the graver and more studious employments : as to the former, she encouraged only a moderate pursuit of it, as it too often produces a weakness of mind, and a distaste of other superior attainments ; but a moderate share of it tends to soften and harmonise the manners ; and she often, after any of the little disputes which will sometimes occur among the most affectionate, led them to the harp, in whose notes these little contentions insensibly died away.

By dancing she thought that the body acquired a free and easy shape ; a just posture, with a graceful and unconstrained air, and an external politeness

politeness and agility, which never fail to prejudice every one in its favour. It would be tedious to detail the many amiable excellencies of this family ;—the Author would be chargeable with flattery to the man he loves, if he did not often restrain his admiration, and rush involuntarily upon the events which will more immediately interest the reader's mind.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

HENRY had reached his twentieth year; a “manly funniness” shone upon his countenance, his eye sparkled with manhood, and his tall figure and graceful air, mingled with unaffected simplicity, rendered him the conspicuous subject of admiration. His father, whose years had not yet so increased as to entirely make him shun the “busy hum of men,” saw with exultation the glorious effects of his plan, but often suppressed the ready burst of popular commendation of his son, by denouncing

nouncing the dangers of praise. "This," he would say, "will produce vanity, the source of every vice; it should, therefore, be checked in its bud, as the Greeks of old instantly killed a child of deformity, lest it should produce another more miserable than itself."

The young ladies, whose ages nearly followed that of Henry, were not far behind him in those distinguishing features which rendered him so amiable. Mr. Somerville's character was the theme of the country; his strict notions of rectitude, his philosophic independence, his talent at argument, and his intimate knowledge of agriculture, not to mention

his courteous affability to every one, whether inferior or equal, for superiors he had none, gave him the general appellation of the Philosopher, and his house that of the Temple of Virtue.

Amongst his most intimate friends was a gentleman of extensive fortune; who, though he lived in all the fashions of gaiety, and seldom left the metropolis till the summer was over, had discernment and taste sufficient to see the merit of Mr. Somerville, and to admire, not to say envy, his independence of all common prejudices in habits and modes of thinking, to which, whenever he conversed with him, he found himself too nearly a slave. He was descended

scended from a distant branch of the noble house of Howard; and this idea, had he been born without an extensive patrimony, would have proved his inevitable ruin; for, though endued with an excellent heart, the vain opinion of rank, the pride of superiority, the negligence of those labours of education which are necessary to acquire knowledge, all centred in his mind in the obligation he was under of supporting the honour of his name, and of procuring, even from strangers, a respect for his splendid equipages, his magnificent furniture, his sumptuous table; vainly supposing that he thereby acquired respect and esteem for

himself. His wife and two daughters were instructed to support a consistency by an elegant carelessness of expence; by learning those exterior accomplishments which give an irresistible attraction in a ball-room, or affect the transient passion of the eye. As he shunned the fatigues of science himself, he trusted that, as nature had endowed him with a tolerable capacity, his children, descendants from his stem, would inherit the knowledge he had been able to pick up, without wasting their early years in the confinement to any useful or valuable improvement.

Possessed

Possessed with this inviting principle, it will be readily conceived that the young ladies were charmed with the kind indulgence of their father. He seldom read, he seldom proposed books to his family. He used to say that painting and music they need not study, but only amuse themselves with, because they could purchase them in perfection. Every article of dress it was the universal practice to order others to procure; and, therefore, he was too indifferent about most accomplishments, except dancing, the polite freedoms of conversation, a little music, talking loud at the opera, and coming exquisitely into a room: all which nota-

ble endowments they executed *à merveille*, to the great delight of their father, and the public applause of Mrs. Howard. But nature had, notwithstanding, possessed his eldest daughter with a share of sensibility and a desire for mental improvement, which seldom fall to the lot of females in very elegant life, but which gave that peculiar zest to all her other attractions, which could not fail to awaken the early passion of Henry Somerville.

As these young ladies were nearly of the same age with the young Somervilles, and as these elegant endowments were not such as accorded in the smallest degree with the sentiments

ments or manners of our Philosopher; he felt himself under much difficulty in determining on some certain rule for their intercourse, during the time of their residence in his neighbourhood. Mr. Howard and Mr. Somerville had been college companions; in their young pursuits they had always associated, and the latter not very unfrequently exerted the athletic powers of his mind, as well as of his body, in the service of his friend. Since they had taken the more mature walks of life, Mr. Howard had not been wanting in those many opportunities which a generous mind is apt to avail itself of, when it finds occasion to requite ancient friend-

ship, in cases where either mental anxiety or pecuniary circumstances stand foremost in the scene.

But, notwithstanding all these, Mr. Somerville felt himself the guardian of his family, now rising into that tender period of time, when, like the aspen leaf, it is moved by every Zephyr! It was one of the charms of Mr. Howard's villa, that the Somervilles lived only five miles distant; too near for long separation, too distant for short visits. The intercourse of the young ladies was mutually coveted by them; it had hitherto subsisted with undiminished gratification; but it had now become dangerous to be continued.

CH A P.

CHAP. IV.

SOMERVILLE reflected deeply on his obligations; Howard had completed the sincerity of his friendship, by reconciling, with infinite pains, old Somerville to his son. "It is thus," said Mr. Somerville one day to his wife, "that when once you accept a favour, you surrender up your independence; our long-tryed friendship had formerly mutual pledges of kindness, which, once performed, were never thought of afterwards, or were balanced by alternate services and esteem: the first, the wisest act

of my life fevered me for a time from the most indulgent of parents, whose conceptions have grown wider and wider from mine, as he has advanced in years and I have approached maturity ; but through the interposition of my friend, this source of the greatest anxiety I have ever struggled with, has been soothed, and at last dispelled. I do not regret that I owe him this obligation, although I feel that it is greater than we can ever repay ; but my concern arises from the fear of an imputation of ingratitude. I prefer, at any time, to be charged openly with a crime, than to be stabbed by an imputation
which

which generally remains unexplained."

Mrs. Somerville, who did not regret less than her daughters would, the prospect of any shyness between the families, and who, perhaps, secretly cherished a small satisfaction in the pride of associating freely with such a circle, and adding to the improvement of her children a little share of their personal elegance, endeavoured to reason on the propriety of general communications, and the assurance she entertained that, as they were so far removed from the gay world, it was not very probable that the manners of the Howards could

in any serious degree poison the simplicity of their education.

“ How often,” replied Mr. Somerville, “ has our Fanny returned from their house to this silent cottage, with an evident distaste of our active pursuits, of our domestic œconomy, and the attention to our farm, which, at other times, she is accustomed to take so much delight in ! Here she sees no tagged lacqueys ready to prevent her call, to wait at her chair, and produce every thing before it can well be asked for ; no table spread with luxuries, but the plain homely produce we have all taken some part in labouring to provide ; no equipages rattling to the door,

nor

nor conversation sharpened by the expectation of new pleasures, new magnificence, new entertainments !”

At this moment Mr. Howard’s running footman leaped over the green-gate that fronts the house, and by a three-fold and violent rattle at the door seemed to declare war against the family ; and, with the knocker in his hand like a battering ram against a bastion, threatened not to leave one stone of the fortress upon another.

The moment was unfortunate, for our Philosopher had not made up his mind. Mrs. Somerville fled to her apartment, and Somerville hand-
ed

ed Mrs. Howard and her eldest daughter out of the coach.

Henry came in from the field with his fowling-piece, and, without any preparations of dress, made his obeisances to the visitors : the fatigues of a long day added a softness to his manly features and impressive eye, which nothing in human shape could resist ; he was unconscious of his power, and this secured its effect ; his auburn hair, blown by the changes of the weather, hung naturally round his countenance ; his piece was slung negligently over his arm, and his dogs looked up in his face, endeavouring to take part in the portrait

trait which nature had so exquisitely drawn.

Miss Howard lost no part of the scene before her, and frequently during the fleeting hour suddenly checked herself in an involuntary smile of admiration, while he recounted the exploits of the day, and accused her own eyes, which had so often deserted every other object.

Henry, who was at this time about twenty years of age, and to whom all other women were equally indifferent, had, very lately, during a short visit, felt something of that inexplicable sensation of delight, which springs coeval with the seeds of early attachments, when they first
break

break upon the youthful heart. He had no resources to furnish him with ceremonies, no mysterious and unravelled etiquettes, which led him to restrain his open admiration, nor any habits of practised foppery, which taught him that superior rank or disparity of fortune could be an obstacle to nature, or an enemy to truth and freedom. A very short association had been sufficient to stamp upon his heart indelible impressions, which he deemed it neither vanity nor presumption to indulge : he was scarcely apprised of the extent of his feelings, that they lead to a passion in which all men are most avaricious. He saw the young men who visited

at

at the house flutter round the young ladies, but their praises were feeble in comparison with those he felt and usually expressed. They, sometimes amongst themselves, spoke of Miss Howard's pouting lips, her charming bosom and her speaking eyes; but he never heard them extol, as he did, her manners, her expressive air, her lively conversation, her polite and captivating affability:—he had discovered the loveliness of her mind, they had only gazed upon the charms of her person. Without much information, she had a pleasing discernment that led her to kind sentiments; she had cultivated the graces, but she possessed, by nature, a sweetness
of

of disposition, which in Henry's view surpassed every other accomplishment.

On the part of Henry, who had scarcely seen any other woman, his attachment offered the certain prospect of sincerity :—on the part of Miss Howard, who had lived in the circle of luxury and external civility, among young men whose admiration and attentions are too often satiated by secret enjoyment, and their hopes of happiness blunted by the frequency of promiscuous indulgence ; she had every prospect, if she could cast her preference on Henry, of finding mutual unshaken fidelity and unadulterated affection.

Mrs.

Mrs. Howard explained to Mrs. Somerville as soon as she made her appearance, that as she expected a play which Mr. Howard was then busy in preparing to be performed in their great hall, to which all the country were to be invited, besides a great number of friends from London, she hoped that Mrs. Somerville and her family would join the throng; that she had no accommodations to offer, as the house would be so much crowded; but that if five miles was not too far for them to return in the evening, she would ensure them a safe and secure escort.

Mrs. Somerville, who trembled for the hazard of a discussion which she
saw

saw her husband just ready to enter upon, and assured, from the turn of his sentiments so lately expressed, of the tenor of his mind, formed some common excuse of the inequality of her daughters' dress to join in so splendid a circle. It was fortunate that they had that morning lengthened their walk, and were both absent together; it was more fortunate that Mr. Somerville chose to adopt his wife's resource, adding only, between joke and earnest, "that such circles seldom thought themselves much honoured by two country milk-maids." "As to Mr. Henry," rejoined Mrs. Howard, "we shall admit him in boots; and if he chooses to take the part of Hawthorn,

Hawthorn, he may bring his gun with him also, and will find admittance." Henry bowed with graceful acknowledgment. As he attended them to the coach, he thought he discovered new invitation; and while he pressed the hand of Miss Howard as she ascended the step, she passed a glance into his eye, which, in a moment, seemed to set the wished-for day at the distance of centuries, and extended the five miles to the long-drawn labours of a tedious journey. Of all the dangers to which the young and susceptible are prone, none is so great as an adieu. How often is a state of calm indifference awakened by a look at parting!

How

How often is a doubtful and veering passion confirmed by a kind adieu ! How transfixed, like Henry's, in a delicious reverie of soul, is a heart anxiously waiting for encouragement, by a tenderly smiling adieu ! It is almost superior to all that may have passed in any preceding interview ; it is the last trait for the mind to dwell and feed upon until the next visit ; and lovers' memories are not given to much exertions. Like great wits, their profound thinking, if thinking ever enters their brain, supersedes their memory.

CHAP. V.

THE hurry and splendour of every public exhibition naturally excite the passions, and are therefore, a very considerable source of pleasure : they amuse the graver hours of the aged, animate the fancy and add vigour to the gaiety of the young, and generally sharpen the taste and pleafantry of middle life. It will thus be readily conceived that Henry felt no small fatisfaction in relating to his sisters the invitation he had received ; but he could form no plan

by which they could be brought to participate.

Mr. Somerville rejoiced to find how easily he had placed the first barrier against a too free intercourse between the female parts of the families, and trusted with confidence to the fortune of the next opportunity, when some other motive equally important might serve his purpose. He considered that his daughters were not likely to form attachments in so elevated a circle, and that they would certainly not thereby lose any in their own; for he would often appropriate to these connections a maxim he held inviolable in the other walks of life—that if ever men desert one line for another,

ther, instances are very rare indeed where they are not rejected by one for the desertion, and not received by the other for want of an original station in it.

He had formed no views for his children that were not within his own plan ; he had strove to implant upon them a vigorous active virtue, an unshaken love of truth, an ardent thirst of enquiry, and an honest undissembling frankness, that should contribute to secure them a just portion of the world's esteem, and a fair claim to future happiness.

On this basis he designed that they should build for themselves their own system, and their *unbridled choice*—

He disdained the idea that he could or had a right to grieve at any choice of attachment they might adopt for themselves; as human beings, he contended that they could not be accountable if they acted by constraint; so long and so far as his parental authority was exerted to curb their inclinations, they could not be free agents; his own duty, after their imbecility of infancy was gone by, consisted only in information, example, and advice. "If my son," said he, "was attached to one of the gleaners in the field, and proposed her honourable marriage, it would be his own affair as to present happiness; and as to future hope,

if

if he behaved well, no doubt he would ascend where distinctions are unknown."

When Mrs. Howard returned home, she found Lord Norbury and Sir Francis Bloom, who had just arrived from London with intention of amusing themselves for a few days with Mr. Howard's hounds. While dinner was serving, Mrs. Howard asked Sir Francis what news he had brought from the other world—a familiar phrase common amongst them when retired into the shades of nature, and speaking of, or rather languishing after, the felicity of court splendour and polished entertainments.

“ Indeed,” answered Sir Francis,
 “ every thing is exceedingly dull;
 there’s no one left in town now—
 no opera, no masquerade, no pic-
 tures, no drawing-room, no soul
 alive; nothing but tradesmen, and
 they are all preparing to carry their
 chuck and their chickens to Mar-
 gate and South-End. ’Pon my soul,
 you can’t venture to knock at any
 one’s door for fear of being kept
 half an hour, while one old weather-
 beaten hag upon board-wages is
 hobbling up stairs, and, peeping
 through the opening of the door for
 fear of being rushed in upon, mum-
 bles out, as well as her few remain-
 ing teeth will suffer her, ‘ that my
 lord’s

lord's gone down to Northamptonshire, and there's nobody at home.' This is all that one gets in London now—and if you attempt to leave your card, the old duchess has been making a pudding or sweeping the hearth, and makes you hold it a quarter of an hour, while she wipes her hand with her apron, before she can receive it."

"A pretty description indeed!" said Mrs. Howard; "but if this is the case, how comes it that you have staid there so long? What detains you from your charming seat in Lincolnshire?"—"Oh, I am not partial to it!—there's a—a—"—"Not quite so much timber there as there

used to be," interrupted Lord Norbury : " an ill wind during the severity of last winter blew down some of the oaks and elms that had grown old in the service."—"Damn the old oaks!" said Sir Francis.—"No, no, Bloom," said his Lordship, "damn the ill wind."

At this moment Mr. Howard entered the room, and soon after dinner was announced. "Well," said he to Mrs. Howard, "how did you find the Somervilles? I thought you would have enlarged our circle to-day, by one or both of the young ladies. I think your Lordship knows the family," turning to Lord Norbury.—"Yes, very well, I met them

them all here last autumn ; the young ladies were coming forward very promisingly." " Aye," said Mrs. Howard, " they are now come forward indeed !" The emphasis with which she expressed the last word attracted the notice of Sir Francis. " But," continued Mrs. Howard, " they are not to come next week ; I rather think neither their father nor mother much relishes such parties for them." " He's a very extraordinary man," said Mr. Howard, " a man whose equal, for a noble generosity of soul and manly openness of heart, one does not often meet with in the world : but his ideas are a little singular. His son too is a very fine

young man, and seems to tread precisely in his father's steps—[Miss Howard's eyes were fixed upon her plate]—I believe Mr. Somerville to be a perfect philosopher." "Is it unphilosophical," said Lord Norbury, "for his daughters to visit their friends? He is, perhaps, one of those unsociable beings who, out of their unbounded wisdom, condemn all the rest of the world;—I remember a man"—"He is by no means," said Mr. Howard, "one of that cast; if he has a failing in his judgment, it is not so much that he ever judges harshly, as that he sees most things in a strong light; his soul is so capacious, that he perceives every object

object on a great scale." "I hope you don't mean," interrupted Lord Norbury, "that he looks at all the world as through a magnifying glass; and so sees every failing and trifling folly twice as large as it is in reality?"

"Pardon me," rejoined Mr. Howard: "I meant to represent that his philanthropy and virtue cannot be magnified too much; but if he has a judgment to form, he combines readily all his motives, and then his resolution becomes unalterable."

"There's something great in that," said Lord Norbury: "I should like to ride over there."—"I'll go with you," said Mr. How-

ard.—“Damn me,” said Sir Francis, “we’ll smoke this philosopher.”
“You’ll find as much fire as smoke,” replied Mr. Howard.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

ON the following day the gentlemen mounted about noon, and rode towards Mr. Somerville's farm. As they approached, they saw him in one of his fields, surrounded by a number of his workmen, and assisting them in loading the corn he was then carrying in; his son was doing the same office in a field adjoining. As they rode into the field, he hailed them with a cheerful welcome, but pursued his labour. Mr. Howard enquired after the ladies.—“I have not seen them since breakfast,” said

D 6

Mr.

Mr. Somerville; "I expected them here in their morning walk; but, perhaps, some fal-lal or other keeps them at home." "Do they often join you in this hard work?" said Lord Norbury.—"Not very often," returned Mr. Somerville; "but if my girls had been born the daughters of any one of these peasants, this would have been their common employment; and a happier one infinitely than what we provide for them." "Why happier?" said Sir Francis. "Oh," replied Somerville, "because manual activity is the soul of happiness; I often find resource in labour, when thinking has distressed me." "I agree to that," rejoined

rejoined Sir Francis; "thinking is a damned bore;—but a life like yours I should have thought would have been free from that. Surely, Sir, with every rural gratification round you, anxiety must be a stranger to you;—few difficulties—all tranquillity—your daily employments—all concur to find pleasures for you; which, to be sure, to some others would be confounded dull."

"Sir," replied Somerville, "those who think these occupations dull, are those who have contrived their own dullness, by vitiating their natural taste by living in a manner which cloy by repetition, and leaves agony and distaste behind it.—Still,

let

Let a man live how he will, he must have some trial; we are not to look for a paradise here—for then we could not expect one by and by; and true prudence is to lead us to choose that which will throw ingredients into our cup sufficient to make the draught go down with as little bitterness as possible, and less sweet than will cloy the palate.”

Sir Francis felt himself satisfied—
 Lord Norbury looked at his watch—
 “Will you go in?” said Mr. Somerville to Mr. Howard: “it is time for me to return home to dinner: if you’ll condescend to take farmhouse fare, I can promise you a good bottle of old port.”

“I find

“I find your philosophy,” said Sir Francis, “tempered with sound sense at bottom.”

As they went on, Mr. Howard rode slowly to keep pace with his friend Somerville:—“Why,” said he, “do you talk of anxiety? It grieves me to think you should have any subject to trouble your repose.”

“My dear friend,” replied Somerville, “you know there is one, which, when I recur to some moments which have passed under your knowledge, I cannot always get over. Although the intercourse between my father and myself is renewed, yet I feel more pain at some of his cold civilities,
than

than I did at his anger. When he writes to me, he addresses me as he would his lawyer—Sir, and sometimes ventures to say, Dear Sir—he writes about affairs only, and concludes with his compliments to my wife.—These distances distract me: the tenderness of our early intercourse, when my mother was alive, daily returns to my mind with unabated recollection; and though Heaven forbids that I should feel a moment's regret at my marriage, yet regret will come for the loss of parental affection, which I have always estimated at so high a value in the scale of human happiness. However, I know that all these must be submitted

submitted to; and as I am blessed with an amiable wife, a glorious boy, and lovely girls, I dare not complain. We wish to grasp all. Perhaps, if I had not this evil to feel, some other would affect me; and perhaps this serves to awaken my spirits, to give me more energy, to call upon me more earnestly for my duty."

"I have no doubt of it," said Mr. Howard. As they entered the green gate, Mrs. Somerville came out to meet them; and Henry came galloping up to them, with his father's coat upon the points of a pitch-fork; and, alighting in an instant, assisted him to put it on.

Lord

Lord Norbury and Sir Francis Bloom engaged both the young ladies in the garden, in gathering and eating fruit as they walked along. They had conceived the situation in life of Mr. Somerville to be such, that any notice from men of their rank would be undoubtedly acceptable; and, therefore, they had little previous ceremony of introduction to study, before they commenced a familiar intercourse and general conversation. They had found already that Mr. Somerville was not below any one of their species, except their titles; and they now saw that his daughters had as just a sense of merit and as amiable manners as any of those

those ladies they were accustomed to associate with. Sir Francis found that he could not smoke either the male or the female philosophers. Lord Norbury had more interesting feelings : he had not mingled so much folly in his draught as his friend had ; and therefore he could taste with superior relish the fruit that was now set before him in its genuine perfection.

Fanny was now eighteen ;—she had every personal accomplishment which blushing nature lavishes on woman at that age ; she had learnt a justness of expression from her father, and from her mother every feminine attraction with which delicacy

licacy adorns a female heart. The dignity and accomplishments of Miss Howard were softened into the cheerful vivacity and graceful simplicity of Fanny Somerville: she was all native innocence: her countenance spoke the purity of her mind, and the charms of her figure and complexion displayed the unaffected loveliness of nature.

Lord Norbury found her irresistible. Sir Francis, who had sparkled till his 35th year a beau of the first fashion in town, had lost that early bloom of sentiment which, before the eye and the heart are corrupted by vices, knows so well how to distinguish real beauty from the meretricious.

ineretricious resemblances or rather attempts it assumes in the gay world.

The ladies, on seeing Mr. Howard alight, had left them. "Oh, what an angel!" exclaimed Lord Norbury. "Merciful Heaven, to have blessed this philosopher with such a creature in this retreat from all the world!—Are we to dine here?"

"I hope not," said Sir Francis: "it will be cursed work! Your Lordship will engross all the women's attention, and Howard and I shall be bored all the day with Somerville's canting philosophy." "Then you may return to Mrs. Howard—plead your indispensable duty at her tea-table: for me, I must

and will have a little more of this divine creature."

"I'll be sworn," replied the Baronet, "your Lordship is a lost man! You have been one of the first at court, and entitled to the free intercourse of all the finest women in the kingdom, perhaps in the known world; surely you owe more to your taste than to fix your notice in this manner upon a farmer's daughter."

"Ah, my dear Frank!" answered his Lordship, "I have admired many women very sensibly, but I cannot tell how it is, there is something here which I never felt before: but rest assured, I am not so lost a
man

man already, as to drop down at her feet, and, like a coxcomb in a novel, vow and swear eternal fidelity in an instant."

At this moment Henry approached them, and, with a cordial welcome in his countenance, told them the table waited their presence; and that he had undertaken to ride immediately to the park, to acquaint Mrs. Howard of their not returning home to dinner.

"Well said," answered Sir Francis; "and if you'll take me into your party, I'll ride with you;" and having made his excuses to Mrs. Somerville, they mounted their horses and were presently out of sight.

C H A P.

CHAP. VII.

THE cordiality of their host inspired pleasantry into his guests; Lord Norbury felt himself truly at home—the cheerfulness of the table gave a zest to the plainness of the repast, which supplied the place of those innumerable sauces which are invented among the great to sharpen, while they serve to spoil, the appetite.

When the gentlemen were left to themselves—"Mr. Somerville," said his Lordship, "I envy you the social happiness you seem to enjoy—you possess yourself more than any man I ever met with."

"He

“ He does more than that,” said Mr. Howard : “ he possesses his friends.”

“ Sir,” said Somerville, “ the few who choose to favour me with their friendship will always find me undisguised : mankind very soon see when they don’t like each other : if we did not cultivate for form and ceremony’s sake those we never can like, we should have fewer false friends, as we call them, to complain of—fewer treacheries—and fewer plans for happiness defeated : the world is wide enough for every one to find his own likeness in it ; but our ambition and interests lead us to press connections without sincerity,

and intimacies without confidence. When we are deceived, we rail at the world: we should rather rail at our own imprudence: we have purchased a commodity and paid dear for it too, and find it at last an indifferent bargain: in this most certainly we are rightly served; for every man of mere interest, with all his debasing attendants of profit and advantage, should be deserted and despised—and what punishment is more dreadful!

“But, my Lord, you said you envied my situation: it is within your power: but, in order to make the change, you must part with rank, distinction, homage, and, above all, the fear of being thought singular.

You

You would call these sacrifices;—and so they are, if your present situation is preferable—if it is not, then you have no cause for envy. But every one is formed for a different station; your Lordship fills one link of the chain which is before us; and if you descended, you might not, perhaps, fill ours so well.”

“ True,” said his Lordship; “ but what part of the scale do the young ladies fill ? ” — “ Mine, most assuredly,” replied Somerville.

“ I rather doubt that,” rejoined his Lordship; “ there’s a something about them which points them out for a more delicate and refined system than yours.”

“ If by that your Lordship means higher life, I most solemnly declare they are as far from it as any nut-brown maid in Wales : they are very good girls, to be sure ; but I never wish (though they are to make their own choice when they are old enough) to see them in higher life than myself ; not because I should regret to see them in a station superior to their father and mother, but because I do not find, by all I collect, that they would be happier.”

“ That can depend only on the man they might connect with,” said Mr. Howard.

As the afternoon had begun to close in, the horses had been ordered
early

early to the door. Lord Norbury and his friend, having bid adieu to the ladies, took a gentle ride home.

“Who would expect to find in a spot so sequestered as this, a man capable of so much merit, refined by education, and claiming fair expectations of fortune, pursue such a plan of rigid economy, active virtue, and be content to suppress his talents, and with all the powers of philosophy accustom himself even to the manual labours of his farm! What a family! Surely, my dear Howard, you have carried me to a spot of enchantment! Such another is not to be found in the four corners of the earth!”

“It is not possible to speak of him as he deserves,” said Mr. Howard—
“I am rather concerned that Sir Francis thought so slightly of him as to decline any acquaintance with him.”

“Why, to tell you the truth,” replied his Lordship, “Frank loves the follies of the world too much to think. He was just leaving college when I entered: and the little attention I understand he ever could be led to pay there to his studies was totally dissipated by his travels, which he immediately engaged in; and ever since his return to England, he has made up his want of thought by his gaieties. You will, therefore,

therefore, judge how little relish he can be supposed to retain for sentiment or philosophy."

Lord Norbury had never heard Mr. Howard throw out the least hint relative to his daughters, and their future fortunes. He had observed them with much pleasure—he had seen their merit—he admired Harriet, and felt the effect of her elegant refinements; but he had felt the same for twenty other women. He was a young nobleman of about twenty-three years of age, whose address and character would ensure him respect among men and courtesy from the women;—and so conspicuous did he stand in public estimation,

mation, that it was impossible for him to discover always, whether the manner in which he was received arose from a sense of his own previous condescension, or from real esteem.

As they drew near to the house, they met Henry upon his return.—“Why do we lose you?” said Mr. Howard—“I was in hopes you would have gone out to-morrow with our hounds.”—Henry excused himself, and pursued his way.

“He seems a fine young man,” said his Lordship: “in short, I never saw such a set of incomparables in my life.”

They were met at the park-gate by Sir Francis Bloom; who, though

though not quite overset, had made so intimate acquaintance with the young farmer, as he called him, that he had arrived at the happy talent of being able to chatter an infinite stock of nonsense, out of which he blundered at random upon a word or two of truth.—“ Ah, ha, my Lord !” said he, stumbling up to him ; “ why, why, I do think your Lordship was right to stay !—We have had all the fun here to ourselves—the young dog says—I—I—you—no, not I, by God—why, he says he’s in love:—so, my Lord, you’ll lose the girl if you don’t look sharp.”

E 5

“ How

“How is all this?” said Mr. Howard. “Nay, nay, perhaps Miss Harriet may tell something about it,” added Sir Francis.—“For shame, Frank!” said Lord Norbury. “I must insist upon it you do not use any lady’s name here, while you are heard by the fellows standing about.” “Aye, aye, my dear Lord, but I know it is, and so you must mind what you do.”

In Sir Francis Bloom’s contemptible condition, any attempt at explanation would have increased their anxiety. There seemed to be a strong indication, that, if any thing like an attachment had been discovered, Lord Norbury was not the
man

man intended; and had it been otherwise, perhaps neither Mr. nor Mrs. Howard would have been much discontented;—but to place any dependence on this hint was imprudent, although it was sufficient to awaken their surprise.

They joined the company in the drawing-room. Here they did not meet with the most distant token of any serious subject; they were received with the accustomed cheerfulness of the circle; and as Sir Francis most wisely consented to be put to bed, they passed a social evening, divided between music and a rubber at casino.

CHAP. VIII.

HENRY, whose open heart had, very unsuspectingly of mischief, fallen into undisguised conversation with the Baronet on the subject of their mutual friends, had been more lavish in his praises of Harriet, than Sir Francis in the vortex of town life was accustomed to hear. "This is talking like a lover, Mr. Somerville."—Henry had never yet met with any person to whom he could talk in this manner about her: for, notwithstanding all our utmost affection and confidence to parents,

we feel their authority or their influence, and we dread to communicate with them for fear of their negative. In the present case Henry had least cause to dread this; but he did not know all his father's mind.

"Indeed, Sir," returned he, "I am most truly a lover."—Sir Francis smiled. "It is now more than a year," continued Henry, full of glowing delight, that he had found a man who he thought encouraged him to proceed—"it is now more than a year since I have fought, by every means in my power, to forget the anxiety I feel when I reflect that in Miss Harriet's long absence in London, her own merit and the circle

else she moves in will never admit a
 hope for me." "She is certainly very
 much noticed," said Sir Francis, "and
 I should rather think—"—"May
 "form some connection there," inter-
 rupted Henry. "Too well I thought
 so—but, Sir, is it wrong or unnatu-
 ral that I should entertain such high
 opinions of her?" "Certainly nei-
 ther," said Sir Francis; "but you
 must not presume to monopolise
 them." "Pray, Sir," said Henry
 quickly, "do you then design to take
 part in them?" "Do you require
 an answer?" said Sir Francis briskly.
 Henry looked surprised. "Why
 do you ask that question?" repeated
 the Baronet. "Because," added
 Henry,

Henry, "if you do, we may compare our thoughts, and see which of us loves her most."—"Did I say I loved her?" said Sir Francis—"Beware of mistakes on such a subject."

"Then, Sir, I presume you do not mean to participate in my sentiments of admiration?" "What then?" asked Sir Francis.

"Then, Sir, you are not one of those who can blame me for the monopoly."

"By Heaven, you are as great a philosopher as your father!"

"That, Sir," said Henry, "will never be!" "But a little to the point," said Sir Francis:—"Do you really design to offer your pretensions to
this

this lady's consideration?"—Henry paused—he looked twice in the face of his companion—as often he could discover no other than that fallow complexion, the common garb of debauchery, wearing fast away into the vale of wasting strength, which defies the deepest urgency of nature to effect a glow :—he could see in his eye nothing but that watery stillness which succeeds the total loss of manly expression and vivacity—he began to despise him—to reproach himself for his too free communication—he thought the tone of the last question discovered something like reproof or scorn ;—his pulse began to beat.—Thus the innocent are affected with
the

the mere shadow of surmise passing by them, as modest women blush when they hear or speak of modesty.

“ That is a question, Sir, which I am not yet prepared to answer; and to one person only in the world do I owe an answer to it.”

The Baronet, to whom all women were absolutely indifferent, and who, therefore, had never suffered himself to be drawn into an affair on their account, except once at a masquerade, when a retired interview was interrupted by the husband of his incognita—affected the utmost *nonchalance* at the subject; and, as they rode on, contrived to fill up several vacancies in their conversation by whistling,

whistling, calling to the dogs which followed them, and by at last purposely telling Henry of what he could form no possible comprehension, the splendour of the Queen's drawing-room, and the skill of Monsieur Vestris standing a quarter of an hour on one toe.

Upon their arrival at the park, they were welcomed by Mrs. Howard and her daughters at the gate; and after Henry had delivered his message, they gave their horses to the groom, and accompanied the ladies to the house.

The simplicity which Miss Howard always observed in her dress in the country was calculated to inspire

spire new devotion in Henry, whose soul was simplicity itself; but his noble and generous spirit, ever mistrustful of his own recommendations, dared but suffer his eyes to approach her with respect, while his heart bounded towards her, and seemed already to possess the object of his ardent hopes. His conversation to Mrs. Howard and to any other person was free and gay; to Harriet he was distant, attentive, and silent; but ready to catch and treasure up every word she expressed.

Whence is that source of awe, of dutious obedience, of distant respect, to her we love? Whence is that backwardness in ourselves to venture
with

with as much ease to converse on general topics with her as with others? Ah! whence is that anxious tremulation of voice and hand, when she first allows us to assist her step, and presses on our nerveless arm as she ascends a carriage! Oh love! benign radiance of Heaven! It is thou who thus markest on our soul thy indelible stamp of truth, and weakenest every nerve of manhood in order that thou mayest impress thy seal the deeper without resistance!

Sir Francis did the honours of the table in the absence of Mr. Howard: the circle had been increased by two gentlemen who resided in the same county,

county, and who had chosen to amuse themselves rather deeply in the billiard-room, while the ladies were dressing for dinner; and from their appearance at table, it was not very difficult to discern between the loser and the winner, or whether the stake had been large or small: the gravity of the one threw a damp upon the circle, which the success of the other had not power to rally. Henry frequently checked his own reverie; and Sir Francis, complaining of fatigue, had continual recourse to wine to inspire both himself and his friends with the cheerfulness they required.

Mrs. Howard saw the prospect which offered for the evening, and
therefore

therefore very soon withdrew with her female party.

Champagne and burgundy then circulated without controul.—Sir Francis called upon Henry for a lady—he hesitated a moment — “Come, my boy,” said Sir Francis, “out with it—here she is in a flowing bumper—damn me, give me your hand, she is a fine creature to be sure—now for it—pronounce her name—and damn me, we’ll swallow her down with nine times nine.”

If it had been possible for Fuseli to invent a countenance of more horror than that of Henry, he must himself have been the demon of discord : to stifle his rage was for a moment

ment pondering in his mind—he had never been put in such a situation—he had none with whom he could advise—distraction augmented his concern: happily for Sir Francis, he paused a moment longer, and recovered himself—“As you desire my toast with so much animation, Sir Francis, I offer you the lady of this hospitable mansion, Mrs. Howard.” “Sir!” said Sir Francis, viewing him with infinite astonishment—

“Sir,” resumed Henry, “I give you Mrs. Howard, and demand your nine times nine.”—A general laugh burst from all the party.—Henry rose from his seat—a flash of indignation darted from his eye.—“Gen-

lemen, I feel myself in the house of my friend : if I mistake not, you are well versed in parties of wine at London ; but they are so different from any that I have ever seen, that you will excuse me if I feel no small concern at being obliged to leave this house abruptly, that we may all avoid the consequences of any repetition of such an insult as this." The reader will easily account for the hasty manner in which he passed Mr. Howard and Lord Norbury on the road.

CHAP. IX.

THERE were many traits in the conduct of Henry which well attested his attachment; but none so amply sufficed to confirm its sincerity with himself and Sir Francis as the last: for a true lover is tenacious of every whisper upon the fair name of his mistress;—scarcely dares a zephyr blow upon her fame, but he is jealous of its flight, and would arrest its progress:—to offer her name at table as a toast is one of the last barbarisms he can admit; it puts her on a level with every other woman

whose fame has grown upon her public imprudence, or her dramatic skill.—If he is jealous of the eye of those who are practised and hackneyed in the ways of men, how much more is he jealous of their insulting comments on her charms! and he thinks that while he preserves her from such notice, she is like the sun at earliest dawn,

“ Blushing along the sky, and sparkling in the dew.” CHRISTALL.

It was unfortunate for Henry, that this event happened before he had scarcely searched his own heart, or had discovered points enough in the conduct of Harriet by which he could judge of hers. He related to his

his father the whole of his case without disguise: it was not likely that he should meet any obstacles from him; but he reasoned with him on the imprudence of his hastiness. “It would have been far more honourable if you had not shewn so much tenacity, and so evidently discovered your rising contempt for Sir Francis: the world never endures that the truth should appear at all times and in all its lights; not that I would recommend you to disguise it by falsehood, but suppress it when it would discover itself in adverse sentiments. This you must adopt in most cases, except those in which you are detecting some wrong: then, the

more truth that can be brought forward sets you up and secures your station above the most powerful antagonist."

"Sir," said Henry, "I have heard you declare, that truth may be spoken to princes, if courage be not wanting."

"'Tis true, my boy, but that is under the circumstance of detection; for if that were an universal doctrine, and we were to say all we think and all we could say to one another, and at all times, no two people could live or have communication with each other: you may see something contemptible in my character or manner, but you have no right to tell me

me so because it may be true. Besides, in one part of your conversation, you was verging very near upon envy and jealousy; and began to trouble yourself lest Sir Francis should participate in your affair; if they were both vested in him, you was wrong, for you had no ground to conceive so—you had not yet discerned his character. I can venture to guess, that from his character and profligate life he is no very great favourite with any of the family."

"How comes he to be so intimate then?" "Because," continued Somerville, laying his hand upon Henry's shoulder, "there are in all stations of life, but among the great more espe-

cially, reasons of interest or ceremony, which forbid men the pleasure or the courage of selecting their acquaintance as I can do here. I dare venture to guess that our worthy friend at the Park has some election influence—some thread of rising fame; or, perhaps, some tinsel cord of splendour in London that necessarily passes through this foolish coxcomb, or he would cast him off with disdain.”

“ I had always conceived,” said Henry, “ that men of his immense fortune could do just as they please in every thing.”

“ Whatever they may appear to do,” added his father, “ rest assured
they

they are tied down to the stake of dependence as much or more than their inferiors : they are daily making large sacrifices to this idol ; and this is the price they pay for their greatness. As to honour and glory, they pursue them as a benighted traveller pursues a glow-worm : cold and inhospitable is their reception ; and, if they never attain the goal, they are despised."

" I do not then envy them these false honours." " No, my brave boy ; you must learn to despise them, and you will find superior happiness in the shades of retirement, as I have done. But let me conjure you not

to suffer envy or jealousy to gain the least footing in your attachments: for one will teach you to dissemble, to assume a gay outside while it rankles at the heart; it has a copious share of artifice and wily contrivances to supplant its adversary, and often falls into its own snare; for it raises continual contests, and, like most other cowards, seldom succeeds: and as to jealousy, always remember, that the women never forgive it."

The anxiety which filled Henry's breast is better conceived than described: he reflected on the past scene, and the past conversation, and particularly the last words of it, with inexpressible pain. His sanguine disposition

position painted to him the probable disapprobation of his conduct, not only by Mr. Howard but by his daughter: as to that of the Baronet, it occupied least of his care.

In the mean time Mr. Howard was not inactive in endeavouring to find out the meaning of the unconnected expressions muttered by Sir Francis on their arrival. At first he smiled at the presumption of young Somerville, and flattered the Baronet with those contemptuous sneers at inferiors which put them so far below the notice of high born-men, as to release *them* from the necessity of explanations of honour, which, among their equals, would in similar cases

have been indispensable. The affair being so far adjusted, and it being pretty evident that the Baronet and the young lady occupied no share in each other's thoughts, Mr. Howard took upon himself to apologise for the son of his friend, who was totally ignorant of the forms of polite life, and too far removed from them by his domestic education and habits of association to understand them.

Our two friends had too much sincere friendship for each other to suffer delay to intervene, which might in any shape be construed into a coldness; and too much affection for their children to meet without anxiety, lest, on the one side, Mr. Howard should
be

be made to hear the declaration of a passion he might not approve, and on the other, a rejection which might end in discord or disregard. They were resolved upon the necessity of meeting; both happily determining, that, whatever should be the result, it would be impossible for such friends to quarrel.

Henry had often bent his rides towards the park, when the cool evening and the stillness of twilight invite the most delicious temper of the soul: here, that he might not too frequently intrude, he had wandered in the thickest shade, content with the pleasure he had tasted on the preceding evening in their conversation, to pass

the next in discovering the party at a distance, hazarding their precious persons only to the extent of the lawn : from his secret covert he could sometimes scarcely suppress his raptures at the sound, when Harriet's gentle voice breathed to the harp some captivating strains : here he watched the harmony, and lent his ear attentively to gather conversations which died away upon the floating breeze. Here he drank deep draughts of animating passion, when he watched every motion and gesture of her elegant form, folded in muslin, and relieved, all subduingly relieved, by the verdure on which she trod. To possess the soul in such a situation,

situation, to fill the bosom with unconquerable tumults, to surrender up to love every cooler faculty of nature, is luxury unbounded; and, like the thin veil which half conceals the charm it was not meant to hide, augments its value by the soft restraint.

Often, when the house was crowded with company, would the anxious heart of Henry prepare his mind for agonies, in the expectation of being himself the witness of attentions received and encouragements granted to men of higher fame and nobler blood than he could boast, whose dignity was their chief and often irresistible recommendation; but in these he was happily disappointed.

Courtesy

Courtesy and politeness seemed to govern her behaviour; and, though she kept none at awful distance, she invited none too near.

“ Oh, indulgent Providence !” would Henry’s honest heart exclaim—“ Be thou my guardian guide ! suffer me to cherish this lovely emulation in my heart, and ere I presume to disturb that tranquil bosom with my sighs, prepare me to deserve her !”

CHAP. X

TO abjure the impulse of the moment, and to consult the rectitude of honourable self-denial, in the midst of the high tumult of the heart and affections, is a mark of resolute principle very seldom found in a young man of twenty, full of life and vigour, animated by the continual feast of admiration, and the angelic superiority of one above all the other female ornaments of creation. Henry had scarcely ever indulged his lips with speaking in Miss Howard's
praise,

praise, to any but his sister Fanny : even to her he never avowed his passion; for he dared not hope success—he dared not indulge his mind with the prospect too distant for his reach.

Harriet herself had never heard or seen from Henry but the most respectful attention—interesting and affecting to her, because it was unformed by civilized ceremony or fawning sycophancy. His countenance never discovered that veil which conceals half the meaning of the polished courtier; and his body never lost its manliness and dignity by those vain and fantastic contortions which so universally disgrace the manners and characters of highly accomplished life.

It

It was strange that Harriet, who was not old enough to have yet been disgusted with the path she moved in, should, without a word from any individual, have indulged a preference for a man whose manners and conduct had been directed more by unaffected nature than any one of her usual associates : but it ceases to be strange, when we reflect that this man was such an one as Henry Somerville.

Mr. Howard could discover nothing in his daughter's countenance which any wife explained to him the enigma of Sir Francis's blundering hints, beyond what he could gather from the Baronet's account of their evening ride; and, while he was gone
to

to sift the matter with his friend, Lord Norbury proposed a lounge with Sir Francis through the park to the great canal, where they might waste an hour or two in angling, and talk over the same business together.

His Lordship defended Henry, and said Sir Francis had certainly pushed him too far. "Damn the fellow!" said Sir Francis; "he has something about him one don't expect in such a place as this; if he was upon the town, we might make something of him; but he has been brought up in his father's house, and made to swallow all his crabbed philosophy,

losophy, that unless you fall into their way they know nothing—”

“ You mistake them,” said Lord Norbury : “ they know more of men and things, by the study of nature, than you are aware of; they are insensibly led to this by their constant occupation, and the mixture of people they see : they live here, it is true; but they are so much known and so highly respected, that they scarcely pass a day without visits from the first people in the county. As to the old man, he has got into a way of living freely in his old age—he has been a miser—now he is quite a gay spend-thrift at sixty-nine.”

“ Aye,

“Aye, aye! let’s go and see the old buck.”—“With all my heart,” replied his Lordship: “I understand that Howard reconciled him to his son upon his marriage, else I should have thought the old gentleman was comforting himself upon his son’s disinherittance. I should imagine he would leave Somerville’s children something worth having.”

“Aye,” said Sir Francis, “then the girls will come in for a share. That Fanny is a fine piece, my Lord.” His Lordship made no reply. “Can we contrive no method,” resumed Sir Francis, “of carrying her off?—Zounds, she’ll be lost here, like the flower I have heard somebody speaks of,

of, that is to blush unseen;—'tis a damned shame."

"My dear Frank," interrupted Lord Norbury, a warm blush rising in his cheek; "let us hear no more of this abominable nonsense—Sir, the man who should dare—"

"Halloo! upon my soul, why—why, my Lord, you—pray, are you acting Cato now, or Romeo?—or perhaps you are preparing to plunge into this glassy stream."

"Be serious, Frank; I have said nothing to be laughed at: surely it is not a very idle thing for a man to declare he will defend the honour of innocence and beauty."

"Most

“ Most noble knight of Arcadia! from henceforth I shall hear couplets flow from your Lordship’s enamoured lips : you will dip your pen in honey—pass the lingering day in contemplating the rural charms of cottage simplicity, and dignify the hereditary counsellor of the crown with the laurel wreaths of rustic indolence and the homely honours of the distaff, with Fanny by your side—Ha ! ha ! ha !—”

Lord Norbury was in no mood to relish all this ridiculous raillery; but knowing the temper of his friend, and not suspecting that he had any design upon innocence and virtue, he endeavoured to hide what he felt

by joining in the laugh. "Well," resumed Sir Francis, "if this is to be the case, I shall find this place insufferably dull. You'll be sighing for Fanny; young Somerville will improve your sorrows by sighing for Harriet, who by the way never can be his; and I shall have nothing left but a sleepy lounge all day, and a never-ending rubber at night with the old folks; so I shall order my horses, and be off this afternoon."

"You cannot be serious!" said his Lordship: "consider, the house is to be full the day after to-morrow, and we have received particular invitations."

"That

“That is of no consequence : your Lordship knows that a man of fashion has always an excuse ! I suppose you’ll go and persuade the women to come ?” “Most undoubtedly,” answered his Lordship ; “I propose doing so this very day, and we’ll drive to old Somerville’s to-morrow.”

Lord Norbury did not relish either this rattling conversation, or the explanation that seemed to be drawing on relative to Henry’s attachment : there could be no reasonable grounds to suppose that Mr. Howard would accede ; and the natural result would be an immediate coldness between the families ; that he, as the friend of Mr. Howard, must appear to take
part

part with him; and his rank prevented him, like lovers of equal fame and fortune, from stealing unperceived to each other's hearts, through the means of retired walks, moonlight shades, and respectful distances: that the result must be, either to renounce his passion, or his friend. He was thus surrounded by a net-work of difficulty that embarrassed him. Could the interview be prevented? Mr. Howard was already on the road—his mind was anxious—if he could be overtaken, he was not likely to listen to specious argument—and his Lordship shunned declaring his true reasons. Men do not so soon avow their attachments. Besides, it

might be a slur upon the honour of Sir Francis, and appear as if he was fearful of any consequences from what had passed.

His difficulties increased as he reflected, and he found it impossible to alter the course of things. "I have a great mind," said he to Sir Francis, "to alter our plan: what does it signify to us, whether these girls come here or not?—We shall have all the finest women in the county—Let's go and see the old fellow to-day; perhaps Howard may have some scheme for us to-morrow."

They walked to the house and mounted their horses, and in two hours time they entered Mr. Somerville's

ville's grounds together. They were admitted at the gate by an old man, whom Sir Francis remembered to have seen at Norbury Park in Suffolk. He bowed with great humility; and Lord Norbury, who was desirous of learning as much as possible about his master, encouraged him by condescending to ask how long he had been there, and other general questions tending to lead him on to give some history of his master's present situation.

CHAP. XI.

OLD Ralph had now reached his seventieth year, and his locks had grown grey in services like the present. He had very early in life been seized by a press-gang at an ale-house door, while he was comforting himself after the labour of the day ; and, having suffered a few hard knocks in his country's cause, had been discharged from the service at the close of the war, and had never been able to resume his rustic occupations ; for he now counted two-and-fifty years, since he had first worn
the

the crutch with which he hobbled to the gate.

“ My master, please your Lordship, since I have lived with him, which is now fifteen years come next Lammas, has had many things to trouble him ; and though he has for some years past changed his living to a deal more company and expence, than when I first came here, yet he always appears very poorly, and as though he were deeply afflicted. But if your Lordship knowed young Mr. Somerville, he married against master’s pleasure, and so he never has got over it ; and some say here in the village as remembered when he bought this place, that he was to be made a

Lord or a Baronet—and this marriage disappointed all that, seeing he was vexed at it, and had no other son nor nephew. But since all that time we have had it all made up, and the young gentleman has persuaded master to take more pleasure; and we have had a power of company, but master has not joined a great deal amongst them; and some people have often come whom he would not care to join if he knowed what they said of him; for as I have opened this gate to every one, I often hears what's said of him."

"Why, what could be said, Ralph?"

"Oh, my Lord! some gentlemen as have been here hunting and feasting

ing for weeks, have rode away and said, 'It's a nice place, but the old dog is resolved to keep it'—as if they wanted him to sell it—and then—
 'The old scoundrel won't die—he'll hold us a tug yet'—and so forth.—
 I could not understand all this, and so I told my dame about it, and she knows a thing or two, being she goes oftener to house than I does; and she says it's about their drinking—but I never heard how master ever dranked hard neither. Poor gentleman! we be all in great alarm now."

"On what account?" said Sir Francis.

"Because he's very bad, and all the men have been sent about all night for

G 4 doctors;

doctors; and Tom, the stable-boy, is gone for young master.—Why, my Lord, master's as old as I be—and we must expect to be called at our time.—God bless your Lordship! I hope you'll see many a good day yet, and have a large honoured family.” “Thank ye, Ralph;” said his Lordship, dropping half-a-crown into his hat; and at this moment a post-chaise drove in with great haste, containing Mr. Somerville and his son.

The carriage did not stop; but Lord Norbury, making sign to the driver to proceed, looked in and said, “We have just heard the cause of your haste.”

They

They were then turning their horses round in order to take their journey home; but Ralph assured them that the house was full of company, that master had often been taken ill suddenly, and that he did not doubt they would find some friends and some refreshments.

As the day seemed to be cast out for adventures, they determined to take Ralph's advice.

When they entered the great hall, they saw on all sides hats and boots, and guns and powder-horns; and in one part, a door half open discovered the rattle of dice, the brawl of the losers, and the hooting and clapping of the winners. A crowded billiard-room

next invited them ; and, in the midst of this thoughtless scene, the staircase occupied with servants busily engaged in carrying with an unexampled hurry and consternation, phials, basons, cloths, and every other formidable apparatus of death ; the messengers from the grim king of terrors being just assembled at the door.

The careless horror of the scene could not pass unnoticed by the discerning eye of Lord Norbury ; he scarcely knew where he stood. Sir Francis, flushed with the glorious fight, declared, with new vivacity, which put back his life at least five years, sparkling in his cheek, that he had not until now felt what it was

to be revived for a moment since he left London; and, rushing past his friend, soon engaged himself at hazard too deeply to return.

The servants were too much employed to attend to Lord Norbury, though he rang the bell frequently; and, opening a door on his own accord, found himself in a spacious library, with the companions only of silent meditation to converse with. The room was furnished with every author, ancient or modern, which money could procure; and opened by a large glazed door upon a spacious lawn, surrounded by a thick hedge of flowering shrubs, except in front, which unfolded a vista of ever-

greens terminated by the gothic tower of the parish church.

“How infinitely to be preferred,” said his Lordship to himself, “is this tranquil saloon, to the noise of those unfeeling guests!” Here he determined to pause till Sir Francis Bloom had grown weary by ill success.

Whatever might be the event of old Somerville’s present attack, he congratulated himself that it was not possible Mr. Howard and his son should have met; and delay seemed to offer a favourable gleam of hope. Having glanced over the books which surrounded the room, and being in no temper for study, but superior to indolence of mind, and readily in-

indulging the lapse of thought on
thought—for

“ Lull’d in the countless chambers of the brain,
“ Our thoughts are link’d by many a hid-
den chain ;”

his Lordship found himself insen-
sibly led to the source of every at-
tachment, when, silent and alone, the
mind, excluding every other object,
dwells on the inward sentiment, and
seeks in vain to find the source of
honourable love !

“ The sweetly melting softness which attracts
O’er all the edge of pain, the social
pow’rs—”

entirely possessed his heart; and more
than an hour glided unperceived
away

away in this delicious feast of contemplation. An arm-chair stood near a writing table in the middle of the room ; and, as he drew it towards him, a paper fell to the floor. As there appeared to be some writing upon it, he took it up with intent to replace it on the table, for he could not avoid perceiving that it might have its importance.—It was written in so indifferent a hand as to be scarcely legible, but it appeared to be fresh ; and was the beginning of a codicil, thus :—“ Codicil, 15 Sep. — I give to my grand-daughter Fran—” Here there was an irregular mark down the paper, as if the hand

hand of the writer had been suddenly shaken.

“Poor Frances!” said his Lordship to himself; “a few minutes more and thou mightest have been mistress of this whole domain!” The demon of intelligence rushed across his Lordship’s brain, and told him at this moment that Frances’s expectations were less than nothing—a fine person without fortune—beauty without the reach of splendour! He rose from his seat as if some great action filled his breast.—Sir Francis Bloom had suggested—what!—horror to think of!—And yet—if *he* should effect it?—How many others disdain delay? Every one.

one here is occupied in vice, he may catch the design when flushed with success!—'Sdeath! I wrong him, grossly wrong him!--He is not so base a coward as to lay siege to innocence and virtue!

At this moment Mr. Somerville and his son entered the room. Lord Norbury smothered his perturbation in making excuses for his being found in that house at such a period; adding, that he had waited some time to know the result, and that the servants he supposed had been too much employed to bring him intelligence; and that he was waiting for Sir Francis Bloom, who had joined some of the company.

“Great

“ Great part of that company,” replied Mr. Somerville, “ must very soon be made acquainted that my father is no more. I find that he was alone at a late hour at night, and when his man came to him in this room, he was speechless in his chair, with a pen clenched in his hand: he was then put to bed, and never opened his eyes or spoke a word. They were using fifty remedies to stimulate latent life—till my arrival; and the confusion increasing, he just raised his eye-lids, while I was pressing his hand to my lips. He recovered sufficient strength to fold his other hand over mine, and, uttering a deep sigh, fell lifeless on his pillow.”

After

After a moment's pause, while Somerville wiped away an involuntary tear, Lord Norbury handed him the paper he had just discovered.

"This must have been the paper which my father was employed upon at his last attack." "I hope," said Lord Norbury, "it will not be found that your daughter is unnoticed by the will." "I fear it may," answered Mr. Somerville; "but the girls will not want a friend (looking towards his son). "Not while Henry lives!" added this noble youth—a generous tear stealing down his cheek.

Mr. Somerville then perceived the keys still depending from one of the
table

table drawers, which he immediately opened. Lord Norbury walked to the door; Henry entreated him to stay, as his advice might be of great use to them.—“And there are a strange set of people here, whom I know not,” added he, “in what way to get rid of.”

Mr. Somerville, having rung the bell, ordered that the gentlemen should be acquainted with the event which had just happened; and in less than a quarter of an hour, the whole troop, in the midst of the noise of Babel, galloped off from the door, accompanied by Sir Francis, whose mind was now too much occupied to think of his friend.

C H A P.

CHAP. XII.

THE open drawer contained a few bundles of papers tied together with red tape, and in the front, half opened, was a will: it was written on one side of a sheet of paper, and, after giving orders for a sumptuous funeral, bequeathed the rest of the property to Henry.

Henry stopped Lord Norbury's congratulations, by expressing his regret that his grand-father had been so backward in making a more equal division, and requesting his father and Lord Norbury to witness his declaration,

declaration, that, whatever the residue might prove, it should be equally participated between himself and his family. But the generosity of this imaginary heir was unhappily circumscribed within very narrow limits; for, on looking into the contents of the bundles, they discovered several grants of considerable annuities to the deceased for his life, and heavy charges upon all his estates to very nearly their value, for the money which he had paid in the purchases of these annuities. Silence and indignation possessed Lord Norbury;—Mr. Somerville could scarcely believe what he saw: at length, slowly closing the drawer and locking

ing

ing up its dire contents, he exclaimed in a low voice—" Mistaken man!"

Chagrined and disappointed as he was, and having just cause to complain, yet Mr. Somerville was never heard to drop a word of crimination or disrespect to the memory of his father. Henry saw the concern which discovered itself, without knowing the reason. Mr. Somerville in few words explained it. Henry smiled at the reverse; adding, that "he felt no disappointment for himself, but for the share which others would have taken in his fortunes."

John Barton, who had lived near thirty years with the senior Mr. Somerville,

Somerville, and had in that time acquired a very tolerable insight into all his affairs, corroborated the truth of these transactions. "One day," said he, "that yourself and my late master had been conversing a long time on the event of your marriage, which you had defended by strong expressions of right; my master was very much agitated, and soon after your return home drove to town, and gave orders for some of the business you mention; and some lawyers came down here together about a fortnight after, and the parchments were signed, and I was called in to witness them; and I well remember that my master then said, "Now we shall do;"

do;" and he and one of the gentlemen shook hands together, and seemed to enjoy what was done; but I did not know what it was; and the same person, whose name was Armstrong, came several times afterwards; and whenever he came, I was always called in to sign my name."

Mr. Somerville stifled, as well as he could, the rising sensations of nature; and having given John full orders for the funeral, agreeably to the will, and having fixed the day when he would come to attend it, was preparing to set off. Lord Norbury expressed his astonishment that he should attend a funeral, and

particularly where he had been so unkindly treated.

“ It is,” replied Mr. Somerville, “ the last office we can perform to the remains of our relations : to desert them at such a period is like deserting helpless infancy.”

As the road separated near the lodge, Lord Norbury took leave of Mr. Somerville and his son, and pursued his return to Mr. Howard's, filled with new ideas, and not a little affected with Henry's firm and generous disposition ; and as he had no pretence for taking the road with Somerville, he soothed his anxiety with the idea that their presence at

home would afford ample protection to all parts of his family.

“ You now see,” said Mr. Somerville to his son, “ the use that may be made of our resolution, to make ourselves as happy as we can within ourselves.—Had we accustomed ourselves to form great expectations for the day which has now arrived, we should have sordidly coveted the enjoyments of another, and have been justly disappointed. We have now much less to feel, and shall have the satisfaction of proving our friends: those who have fluttered round us, like butterflies in a sun-beam, will be seen to bask in some other hemisphere;—those whose esteem we may value

value will shew their sincerity by continuing their friendship."

Henry was lost in thought.—
 "Besides, my dear boy," added Mr. Somerville, "it is not friendship only that is tried by adversity: the affections find more noble incitements to prove their sincerity, and the soul discovers far more energy by opposition than it can acquire by an uninterrupted channel of prosperous fortune."

"I never formed hopes of Harriet," said Henry, "by annexing any ideas of fortune on either side: I found that I loved her, without ever considering whether my affection could be weighed by gold; but I learn that this is commonly the

case ; and I now learn too, that every hope is lost !”

“ You know, Henry,” said his father, “ that when you first mentioned your attachment, I could not flatter you with hopes. It does not appear to me that money would ever forward or prevent it ; there is so wide a distance between you, and the circle in which Mr. Howard and all his family move is so far beyond both your ideas and your utmost expectation, that, if you were possessed of the lady’s good opinion, I doubt whether you would ever gain her father’s.”

“ The contrivances of the world then must be very ill formed for the

the happiness- people boast of so loudly," said Henry.

" 'Tis true, Henry : they boast a great deal of what they never acquire, nor ever taste."

" But, Sir, as you state it, they would absolutely prevent it."

" This is almost universal ; for we never find any one who will allow that he is contented. Your grandfather, notwithstanding every thing around him, and all he had done to please his fancy, led a miserable life. None can be truly happy who do not seek to promote the happiness of others ; for we live upon their smile and die by their frown. Who does not delight in humanity, benignity,

and gratitude? Who does not hate the proud, the wicked, the sordid, or the cruel, and even spurn at the ungrateful? Thus every one may be understood to have a mutual alliance for support of each other; and that alliance is the most noble which perfects men in right conduct: it makes us partake of each other, as it were, and communicate rectitude among ourselves. But so great is the universal power of habit, that although the most lively sparks of virtue are implanted in us by nature, yet they are often extinguished by it, and vices are nourished and confirmed."

"But, Sir, the habit which leads men to something else than happiness

ness must have some appearance or motive, surely, that wears a better invitation? You describe virtue to possess all this, and yet habit leads men away from it! If virtue is desired for any other thing than happiness, it should seem that something may be preferable, or at least equal to it. Is it wealth, is it beauty, is it health?"

"These are all transient," said Mr. Somerville.

"Is it pleasure?"

"That's transient also," replied he; "yet, my dear son, all these often assume alluring forms, and give us false expectations of that happiness which can alone be permanently se-

cured by *habitual virtue*; it is by acting under these false impressions, and by seeing through this false medium, that evil habits arise; but on the contrary, one act of virtue or liberality produces abundantly more enjoyment than any common pleasure multiplied ten-fold. You may judge, therefore, of a man's enjoyment whose whole life is virtue. All good men, by nature, love honour and rectitude, and they never deviate from this rule of conduct:—so the truly liberal suffer no act of kindness to be profitable to them; generosity with emolument is incompatible; none ever part with honour for a price, but those who mistake artifice for it.

Where

Where is benevolence, when no one can be found to unite his neighbour's welfare with his own? Where is friendship, when mutual regard is unfelt and unknown?"—

Henry breathed a deep sigh.

"You said, Sir, that Mr. Howard might not be induced, whatever his daughter might;—would it be wrong to try the result of that?"

"Do you think, then, that Harriet could join your labours in the field?"

"If she loved me, Sir."

"Ah, my dear Henry, we have not love like this amongst us! Harriet's mode of life too—it would be impossible—or worse than misery."

H 5

"Curse

“Curse on these modes of life!” interrupted Henry; “had we both been peasants, we should long ago have been able to tell each other our mind, and have been made happy in all our wishes. But, Sir, what could be the consequence, if—”

“Ask the events of this day, Henry.”

CHAP. XIII.

MR. Somerville having communicated to his family all the unfavourable circumstances which attended the event of the day; and having endeavoured to console one another by the most endearing assurances of mutual affection; Mrs. Somerville acquainted them that Mr. Howard had called in the morning, and expressed great concern at not meeting with Mr. Somerville. Our philosopher, who, in his transactions with the world, strictly attended to its forms, was now prevented from

going to the Park ; and, relying upon the information Mr. Howard would receive from Lord Norbury, entertained no doubt but that he should see him next day. On the other hand, Mr. Howard remained for some days in strange astonishment at hearing nothing from his friend, and still more at never seeing either Lord Norbury or Sir Francis Bloom, who had left the Park together as already mentioned, while the ladies were dressing, and without seeing any person to whom they had condescended to explain their departure or intimate their return.

Suspense awakens every apprehension, and engenders suspicion. The

approaching gala would, under such a situation, increase his anxiety; it was impossible to conjecture the road they had taken; and if they had really left him in disgust, it was equally impossible for him to seek them. His family were ignorant of their intentions, and enjoyed that serene tranquillity which evidently testified how remote they were from taking part in the storm which was breaking round them.

In the midst of the splendid decorations with which the house and park were now preparing for their guests, when every soul was busy in forwarding the great *coup d'œil*, so essential in every celebrity, a servant arrived

arrived in great haste, and presented to Mr. Howard a letter addressed in the hand of Lord Norbury :

“ *My dear Howard,*

“ Sir Francis Bloom and myself came hither yesterday morning for a lounge to see old Somerville, who died while we were at his house : his son and grandson arrived at the same time, and have cause to regret their fortunes. After I had continued with them for some time, we left the place together on our respective routes, Frank having gone before with a party whom he had joined at hazard during my stay at the house. I had not rode a mile on my return, before I perceived his horses at the
door

door of an inn, where I found him literally beat down and at his last stake. He has lost every thing to one Armstrong, whom you must remember to have been turned out one evening at Brookes's. I passed my word for his horses; but when we were coming away, they were seized by an officer from town, for a debt due to some tradesmen. Poor Frank is completely done up! I have endeavoured to comfort him, but he is utterly in despair! He begs me to make his excuses; and I trust that, when you learn that his vexation has confined him ever since to his bed, you will pardon me also for not having left him. Adieu till I am enabled

abled to leave our misguided friend!
and believe me

Ever yours, "NORBURY."

In respect to Lord Norbury, Mr. Howard would have readily left his house to visit him ; but for Sir Francis, he never had entertained any other ideas than what might border upon disgust. He therefore contented himself with writing to his Lordship in answer, that, had any concern happened to him, he should have flown to him instantly ; at present he must plead his pressing engagements at home, and entreat his excuse for sending this expression of his best wishes for Sir Francis Bloom's recovery.

When

When Lord Norbury read the letter, he concluded that Sir Francis could expect little assistance from Mr. Howard; which when Sir Francis knew, he increased his present miserable chagrin, by the most violent invectives against him, for his sordidness in the midst of unbounded wealth; ascribing that character indiscriminately to all who, whether from motives of disapprobation, withheld their countenance, or from sinister causes pretended to an hypocritical sanctity in order to save themselves from obliging their friends.

“What obligations have I,” said he,
 “to a man who smiles upon me in
 my

my prosperous days, and when I am cast down disdains to know me?"

Armstrong, who had continued at the inn under the hopes of pigeoning Lord Norbury, and having learnt that the letter from the Park had produced no alteration in the present state of affairs, began to despair of advancing his purpose, till he hit upon a method of attracting his victim again to the board.

He sent one of his companions to Sir Francis with a verbal message, "that he was truly concerned at his ill-luck, and, in order to give him a further chance, he would offer him a throw for a cool hundred, and give him the stake." This Lord Norbury

bury disapproved. " You have now," said he, " closed the scene, and are satisfied of its folly : you regret bitterly so unthankful a pursuit : you are not yet under the clutches of this black-leg : depend upon it, if you listen to this offer, you will be followed up till you become too much embarrassed for existence. Allow me to entreat you to resist this temptation, and to shew that you resent an insult like that now put upon you."

Sir Francis turned a deaf ear to this advice, until the word "insult" awakened him; not that he suffered any wrong at the proposal made, for it had that inducement in it which raised

raised in him the last flash of expiring hope; but he judged of insult only by the interpretation of others; and if this should afterwards be deemed so by any of his companions of folly, he dreaded their sneer far more than any secret sensations of his own heart.

When the messenger returned for his answer, Sir Francis told him, in a haughty tone, that he rejected the proposal with disdain.

Armstrong's room was on the same staircase; and the door of the Baronet's apartment having been left open, they heard the answer delivered, which produced an imperious and unmeaning horse-laugh, and an unknown

known voice exclaimed--“The Baronet won’t die dunghill, by G—d !”

Lord Norbury was thoroughly tired of his companion, and the penance he was thus bound to endure. He found it improper and unsafe to leave him in the midst of these harpies : he could not conduct him to Mr. Howard : he had, therefore, no resource but to propose a short visit at Norbury Castle.

Sir Francis was in no mood to relish the still silence of retirement ; and therefore, to shun reflection, proposed Brighthelmstone, without possessing any of those essential requisites which alone render that place agreeable to fashion—money and
good

good spirits. The journey was, however, agreed on.

The spirit of gaiety which possesses the idle and dissolute never fails to exhaust the stores of friendship, or the vigour of human services; it leaps the bounds of the sincerest promises; it disdains the restraint of honourable fidelity; and, by spurning useful council, rushes into the gulf of present and eternal infamy.

Lord Norbury, whose disposition was all compliance, could not leave the house of Mr. Howard for the rest of the season without waiting upon him; besides which, he had some previous arrangements to make or to order in Suffolk, before he
could

could conveniently alter his plan; and therefore, as his friend had considerably amended during the past two days, he proposed leaving him to his own care while he rode to the Park, promising to return on the following evening, charging him at the same time to avoid the least interview with Armstrong or his associates.

His Lordship arrived at the Park time enough before it was necessary for him to dress, to relate some further particulars to Mr. Howard of his friend's situation, and of the plan for his amusement now adopted. "I fear," said Mr. Howard, "that plan will never answer his purpose; he

he is too far gone ever to be amused without mingling these accursed dice into the scheme. I have long understood that he has lost or mortgaged every inch of ground he possessed, and has no other resource but a gaol : beware of your Lordship's regard for him : his principles and his profligacy together will one day or other injure your own fortune and happiness :—if you can shake him off, it will be the most fortunate stroke you can desire.”

A carriage with some of Mrs. Howard's most intimate friends now drove to the door, which reminded them that it was time to dress ; and though Lord Norbury was very desirous

stirous of returning to his friend, yet he suffered himself to be persuaded to rest during that night, and partake of the gay scene which in a few minutes would be opened to his view.

C H A P. XIV.

THE entrance at the lodge, and the avenue to the house, told the admiring multitude, that nature for that evening yielded to the splendour of art. Lamps of various colours hung in festoons from tree to tree; the saloon was decorated with devices of light, rendered more brilliant by innumerable reflectors of cut glass; the drawing-room, opening to a very large orangery with myrtles and flowering shrubs, was entirely illuminated with transparencies of Apollo and the Muses, admitting, by a recess
towards

towards the gardens, an orchestra of considerable extent. The lawn, the vista, the whole surrounding parterre, also vied with each other in rendering the *coup d'œil* a scene of enchantment; but the most material of all were the chief actors on the scene. Mrs. Howard, at all times elegant, was here most truly the Queen of Smiles: her daughter Harriet, in all the charms of excellence, seemed to have descended from her native skies; she looked or seemed to look around for one, who in this busy sport of gaiety might well have found a space; or, like the father of the world, surrounded by every charm, save one!

“—— the sweets of sense

Do they not oft with kind accession flow
To raise harmonious fancy's native charm?"

The brilliancy of the entertainment, and the sumptuous splendour of the company, filled the imagination and the passions with unexampled exultation. Spectators from all parts of the county were assembled;—the numerous train of equipages and servants filled the roads near the place, and the sounds of festive luxury chid the lazy sun for keeping back his morning rays.

The night was peculiarly serene—the sultry sun had yielded to the cool zephyrs of evening;—the air was still, and every external charm seemed
to

to lend its congenial transport to the melody within : harmony took her walk undisturbed, and pleasure

“ — at each pause her melting accents caught,

In sweet delirium of romantic thought.”

The rooms, the lawn, and every alcove, were filled with company, and every heart seemed to feast upon the rapture of its own enjoyment. Harriet, whose proficiency in music had often led her to indulge inventive fancy with the composition of some delicate air she had read or transformed to her taste, was earnestly solicited by some ladies, whom Lord Norbury had joined, to favour them in an alcove with one of her last fa-

vourites. A guitar was procured with some care that it might not be generally observed, and she sung to it the following little air, which she had altered from a justly favourite author.

AIR.

Say what transports the timid dove,
The wreath of conquest, or of love?
What compass points her daring flight,
Where mortals gaze and bless the sight?
Bid rocks, and woods, and mountains rise,
Eclipse her native shades, or skies;
In vain!—thro' pathless air she goes,
And 'lights where all her cares repose!

“ Oh, Heavens!” exclaimed a voice, and by the accompanying sound clasping both hands, from behind the alcove—and, as if conscious of

of the imprudence of the emotion, a rustling was instantly heard among the leaves, and some hasty foot-steps succeeded across the path-way behind the lawn. The ladies were much alarmed, and Harriet trembled with surprise. The gentlemen attempted to rally their spirits; but Harriet knew too well that well-known voice to recover so readily to her former tranquillity; in every figure she expected to trace the features of one whose presence would have made the whole complete—

“ And still she traced his steps along the glade,
When hazy hues and glimmering lights be-
tray'd
Half viewless forms—”

while Henry frequently slackened his pace, and often unobserved put back his hastening steps,

“ ——— still listening, as the breeze
Heav'd his deep sighs among the aged trees !”

Some young men, rather elevated by too frequent assiduities at the side-board, who heard or understood very indistinctly the rumour as it buzzed through the company, mingling error and inconsistency as it passed along, desirous of distinguishing their valour, and emboldened by the glory of conquering a flying antagonist, whom they judged to be an ignorant peasant whom clumsy curiosity had led too near the circle, set off, against the persuasion of every one near them,

to

to overtake the insolent fugitive, determining that his punishment should be not more innocent than his crime—by placing him in the centre of the illuminated lawn, a ridiculous spectacle for the company's amusement.

Mr. Howard, who had hitherto been engaged in another part of the rooms, now joined the general buzz upon the lawn, and laughed heartily at the simple cause of alarm, very much disapproving the scheme of revenge, and sending one of the servants after the pursuers to stop their progress.

The chief part of the company now gathered into the drawing-room, to hear a piece composed by Dr.

Haydn, and which he had consented to lead on the grand piano forte. Scarcely ten people were left upon the lawn, of whom Lord Norbury, three other gentlemen, Miss Howard and two female friends, made a part. They walked near enough to the house to enjoy the music, and still avoid the heat of the room.

Harriet, who had been much alarmed at the folly of the pursuit, discharged her mind from anxiety as much as she could, by the probability that, whether the voice had really been Henry's or not, the fugitive must have long ago cleared his ground before his valiant pursuers had set out upon their foolish journey. She
could

could not avoid, however, lending a listening ear to the silence of the night, when the trampling of feet at a distance and the murmur of voices were indistinctly heard: she smiled in the security of seeing these noble sons of courage placing themselves in the spot they had designed for the terrified peasant, and boasting of what their arm would have achieved if they had been fortunate enough to have found him.

The prodigious throng of carriages, horses, and servants in waiting, could easily account for the noise they heard; but their tranquil pleasures were soon disturbed by the nearer approach of oaths and voices

—“Unhand me, Sir!”—“Hand-cuff him!—the stocks!—the horse-pond!—hang’d in chains!”—“Lead on!—shew me to Mr. Howard!”—all expressed in tumult and confusion; more and more disgusting as it approached, and mingled with the rage and anger of twenty voices at once, and none were wholly articulate. Many of the company ran out to the lawn, and were soon amused by the heroes who had lately left them, assisted by a score of the country people, to whom they had taken care to transfer the trouble of bringing the victim along. They entered the lawn in this triumph, dragging along a man folded in a large

large furtout and covered with a broad flouched hat;—his hands were tied behind him by a handkerchief, and a dozen fellows clenched their fists round the collar of his coat.

“Where is your master?—Shew me to Mr. Howard!” he exclaimed, and suddenly disengaged his hands, which he now dealt about in so profuse a manner upon two of the young gentlemen who were running forwards to the company to brag and lie about what they had done, that they had very soon little power left to ask for mercy. One of the peasants who held him seized a stick from the hand of one of the followers, and struck him so violent a blow on the
left

left arm as utterly to disable it ; and in the scuffle he lost his hat. “ ’Tis he !—’tis he !—my Henry !” cried Harriet, rushing from the affrighted circle, and, springing forwards, fell upon his panting bosom and sunk into lifeless night.

“ My soul ! my life !” exclaimed Henry, struggling to support her : “ could I have conceived all this, how much more would I have willingly borne !”

Mr. Howard, who now hastened to the spot, stood petrified with amazement at the picture. Every hand was busy and too busy in seeking remedies, and giving assistance to carry his daughter to a room. Henry
could

could not be persuaded to quit his luxurious hold, till he had left her on a sofa in the care of her mother and a few female friends.

Exulting and riotous with a joy which nature would be outraged by the feeble attempts at description, and bounding with a gratitude no other human being ever felt, Henry gazed around him on the admiring crowd, swelling with the conscious pride of unaffected love, and breathing all the holy energy of unadulterate passion, crowned with the blessedness of sincere return.

“From henceforth she is mine!” said he, clasping both his hands:

“how

“how are my anxious moments all repaid!”

Every one was anxious to hear the story of the adventure; and Mr. Howard with Lord Norbury, having themselves helped him to get rid of his coat, and to wind his left arm in a sling, discovered a more interesting figure to the company than had perhaps ever before awakened their admiration.

They seated him on a sofa.

CHAP.

CHAP. XV.

“ I HAVE much apology, Sir,”
 said he, addressing himself to Mr.
 Howard, “ to make for the situation
 in which I have thus disturbed the
 harmony of your splendid entertain-
 ment. It may be said, that the me-
 lancholy cause which prevented me
 from accepting your kind invitation
 should have kept me at home. I
 feared the imputation of inconsist-
 ency ; but this event makes me dis-
 dain that fear. Ever since my grand-
 father died, I have strove to dis-
 courage what, perhaps, I was too
 pre-

presumptuous, though silently, to have indulged before:—to hear the whole county talk of your preparations—to know that this earthly paradise was but five miles, within my reach—how could I refrain!—The decent orders of society prevented my appearance; but my heart irresistibly led me to become a hidden spectator, and to watch the object most attracting to my heart: I would have given worlds to have suppressed the exclamation of rapture I then counted fatal. I fled, not through fear, but through respect to you and to the idolized object who excited it. When I heard the hasty steps of those who pursued me,
I faced

I faced about, lest my character might suffer in my own eyes as well as theirs at acting the dastardly part of a fugitive vagabond. Before I was spoken to I was met with blows, oaths, and execrations, as though I had fled from justice, stained with hands of blood. Assailed on every side, I threw away the stick I held in my hand, that I might defend myself on equal terms, for I felt the grasp of one of the ruffians at my throat ; before he fell another charged me in the face. I was beset by numbers. Two young men whose dress, superior to the rest, led me to suppose them to be in liveries (for I could not mistake them for any of
your

your company), seized me by one arm, and discharged their fists together in my face, which I returned as well as I was able, till one fell near me, and the other withdrew, preferring the task of urging on the rest of their companions. I felt that I had not committed any crime worthy of all this—I justified myself by the excess of my punishment—but the end has amply rewarded the toil!”

Mr. Howard, who had listened attentively to this animated narrative, forbore to press the conversation further, lest, from the praise which Henry drew upon himself from the lips of every hearer, he should not have been able to preserve his own

con-

consideration for his daughter, whom he had no design to dispose of so suddenly; for he had weighed her evident attachment, and advised her upon cool reflection. He therefore ordered his post-chariot to be ready at the door immediately. During this explanation, the affair having become the universal topic amongst all the gentlemen of the second table, a crowd had gathered round the front of the house; and as soon as the news of the post-chariot was circulated from the door to the stable, there was scarcely a man who could venture to leave his stand but rushed forward to see Henry come out. In the mean time Harriet, who had been recovered

recovered by the attentions of her mother and sister, and two of their select friends, with whom alone she had been suffered to retire, had repeatedly asked if Henry was safe, and had been indulged by the promise that she should see him on the next day;—but the evening was far spent, and she withdrew unobserved to her chamber.

A servant announced that the post-chariot was at the door. The curiosity of the people for a man they had seen every day was wonderful. As he took leave of the company, every eye and every breast “told him their esteem :” as he approached the hall, an hundred voices, with
eyes

eyes eagerly peering in from the hall-door, cried, "Here he comes! Here he comes!" Mr. Howard and Lord Norbury accompanied him.

"God bless your Honour! Heavens preserve you, master! They did not know it was you!" broke from every tongue;—and as he bowed to them with thanks, their honest hearts overflowed in redoubled cheers, which followed him to a considerable distance.

The house was soon after cleared.

Is it within the compass of the human soul to imagine the luxury of Henry's mind? Is it within the scope of nature's most indulgent gifts thus to be blest almost before

He sought the blessing ? Does human life afford us instances of such high and heavenly sincerity, where heart meets heart, and breaks the chain of human forms, and seeks and finds, and thus makes union with its own ? Merciful Providence ! thy decrees, ever formed for happiness and love, would guide the councils of our hearts, and wake anew the energy of things, if human pride and ceremonious craft, multiplying all the evils of our probation, did not disjoin thy fairest happiest work !

Whenever we look into the heart, before the ways of men have spread nets around it, before pale envy has given it foreign claims, and sordid interest

interest taught it to be dissatisfied
 and disaffected with itself, we find
 it formed for sincerity, moulded in
 the lap of truth, and ignorant of sin;
 open to the noblest sources of de-
 light, an unsuspicious confidence, a
 generous charity, and a virtuous af-
 fection. Blest mortal! Could his
 early stage continue, he would make
 earth a heaven!

“—— For him the Spring

Distills her dews, and from the filken gem

Its lucid leaves unfolds; for him the hand

Of Autumn tinges every fertile branch.

With blooming gold, and blushes like the
 morn.

Each passing hour sheds tribute from her
 wings;

And still new beauties meet his lonely walk,

VOL. I.

K

And

And loves unfeeling attract him, Not a breeze
Flies o'er the meadow, not a cloud imbeds
The setting sun's effulgence, not a strain
From all the tenants of the warbling shade
Ascends, but whence his bosom can partake
Fresh pleasures unreproved."
generous charity, and a virtuous af-
fection. Bless mortal! Could his
early stage continue, he would make
earth a heaven!

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

"—— For him the Spring

Distills her dew, and from the lilken gem
Its fold leaves unfolds; for him the hand
Of Autumn tinges every tender branch
With blooming gold and blush like the

morning.

Each passing hour sheds tribute from her
wings;

And still new beauties meet his lonely walk,

And

K

Vol. I.